

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 /081 W

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R 202315Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5938

INFO USUN NEW YORK 315

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL HAMILTON

AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 0973

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOF, GT, BH, UK

SUBJECT: UK-Guatemalan negotiations on Belize

REF: GUATEMALA 0588

1. GUATEMALAN DAILY GRAFICO REPORTED FEBRUARY 19, WITHOUT INDICATING SOURCE, THAT EX-FONMINS JORGE SKINNER-KLEE AND ROBERTO HERRERA AND FONOFF LEGAL DIRECTOR LUSI AYCINENA HAD LEFT LAST WEEKEND FOR WASHINGTON TO RESUME TALKS WITH UK REPS ON FUTURE OF BELIZE. STORY SAYS "EVERYTHING APPEARS INDICATE THAT (GUATEMALAN NEGOTIATORS) WILL SEEK MEDIATION AND HELP FROM US STATE DEPARTMENT, WHICH WAS GIVEN PREVIOUSLY" PRIOR TO LAST BREAKOFF OF TALKS.

2. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE FROM REFTEL, STORY ESSENTIALLY ACCURATE EXCEPT FOR LOCUS OF TALKS AND REFERENCE TO US MEDIATION. BRITISH CONSUL WILLIAM MCQUILLAN CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF THAT GUATEMALAN DELEGATION HAD LEFT FEBRUARY 16 FOR NEW YORK AND WAS SCHEDULED ARRIVE IN BERMUDA FEBRUARY 19 FOR TALKS WITH BRITISH FEBRUARY 20-21. IN ADDITION THOSE MENTIONED ABOVE, MCQUILLAN SAID GUATEMALAN DEL INCLUDED FERNANDO SANCHEZ, DIRECTOR BELIZE
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AFFAIRS IN FONOFF, AND JULIO VIELMAN, PRIVATE BANKER WHO WAS TAKEN

ALONG AS ECONOMIC ADVISER. BRITISH DEL WAS TO BE HEADED BY UN PERM-REP RICHARD, BUT MCQUILLAN WONDERED IF UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING MIGHT KEEP HIM IN NEW YORK. IF SO, LEADERSHIP WOULD FALL TO NICHOLAS LARMOUR, HEAD OF WEST INDIES AND ATLANTIC DESK IN FCO.

3. MCQUILLAN SAID TALKS WERE INTENDED PREPARE FOR MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING AND BERMUDA NEGOTIATORS WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OTHER PREPARATORY MEETINGS WERE NECESSARY AND INDEED WHETHER THERE WERE SUFFICIENT PROSPECTS OF PROGRESS THAT IT WORTHWHILE CONTINUE MEET. TWO DELEGATIONS WILL ALSO HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT IF ANYTHING THEIR GOVERNMENTS SHOULD TELL PRESS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW LEAK REPORTED ABOVE AND RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT LAUGERUD THAT RESUMPTION OF TALKS WITH BRITISH WAS IMMINENT. MCQUILLAN SAID BRITISH REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIALITY WAS IN CONSIDERATION FOR BELIZE GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE PLACED IN AWKWARD POSITION IF FACT ITS FUTURE BEING DISCUSSED WITHOUT ITS PARTICIPATION BECAME KNOWN IN BELIZE.

4. AFTER BERMUDA MEETING BRITISH DEL WILL FLY TO BELIZE TO BRIEF GOVERNOR AND PRIME MINISTER PRICE. MCQUILLAN ARRIVING BELIZE FEBRUARY 22 TO ATTEND BRIEFINGS AND PROMISED GIVE US RUN-DOWN ON HIS RETURN.

5. IN DEVELOPMENT HOPEFULLY UNRELATED TO ALL THIS, ALL PAPERS REPORTED AT LENGTH FEBRUARY 18 AND 19 ON ALLEGED ARREST LAST WEEK OF FOUR CHICLE WORKERS ON GUATEMALAN SOIL BY (VARIOUSLY) BRITISH TROOPS OR BELICEAN POLICE. ACCORDING FELLOW WORKERS, ARREST OCCURRED BETWEEN PUSHILA AND TANCOJ IN MUNICIPALITY OF SAN LUIS. BOTH BRITISH CONSUL AND GOG OFFICIALS TOLD REPORTERS THEY HAD NO INFORMATION ON ARREST.

6. MCQUILLAN TOLD US FEBRUARY 20 HE HAD JUST RECEIVED CONFIRMATION FROM BELIZE THAT FOUR GUATEMALANS HAD BEEN ARRESTED BY POLICE IN TOLEDO DISTRICT, WELL INSIDE BELIZE, AND CHARGED BEFORE MAGISTRATE IN PUNTA GORDA WITH ILLEGAL ENTRY, ILLEGAL CHICLE BLEEDING AND ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF ARMS. ARMS AND CHICLE WERE CONFISCATED, FINES OF \$350 EACH LEVIED, AND FOUR WERE SERVING SEVEN-MONTH TERMS IN VIEW THEIR INABILITY PAY FINES. MCQUILLAN SAID INCURSIONS BY CHICLE GATHERS WERE FREQUENT WHENEVER CHICLE GREW CONFIDENTIAL

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SCARCE ON GUATEMALAN SIDE OF BORDER. ONLY SIGNIFICANCE TO INCIDENT IS ITS POSSIBLE EXPLOITATION BY GUATEMALAN PRESS OR GOVERNMENT; FORMER HAS ALMOST DISAPPEARED FROM FEBRUARY 20 EDITIONS, AND THERE IS NO SIGN LATTER IS OCCURRING. ASSISTANT G-2 TOLD DATT THAT CHICLEROS IN THAT AREA OFTEN WANDER ACROSS UN-MARKED BORDER AND IMPLIED GOG DID NOT ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO INCIDENT.
MELOY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEGOTIATIONS, MEETING DELEGATIONS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GUATEM00973
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750062-0659
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750228/aaaaazeg.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 GUATEMALA 0588
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <06 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UK-GUATEMALAN NEGOTIATIONS ON BELIZE
TAGS: PBOR, GT, BH, UK, (AYCINENA, LUIS), (SKINNER-KLEE, JORGE), (HERRERA, ROBERTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006